

## Chapter 4B: Historic Resources

### Developmental History

The City of Hoschton's namesake comes from three Hosch brothers, J.R., R.A., and William, who moved to the area and built a store in 1865. The Town was, similarly, first known as "Hoschton's Store" and located east of present downtown at the intersection of Peachtree Road and SR53--where the J.E. Hill home stands. In 1880, two of the Hosch brothers, R.A. and J.R., sought to develop the town and began surveying lots. The brothers devoted many lots for public uses like a church, school, Masonic Lodge, cemetery and the town square. They also sold lots at a public auction on December 21, 1881 that allowed ownership for new residents. By 1889, the town with its linear, grid pattern formally existed in Georgia and within Jackson County. It eventually grew into a bustling town with two cotton gins, a tannery, newspaper, millinery, and school.

Like many towns in Georgia, Hoschton developed as a railroad town after the Gainesville Midland Railroad built its line through the town in 1878. Residents helped bring the railroad to the town by soliciting subscriptions, selling stock, and hiring former Governor A.D. Chandler to assist them in their efforts. The Hoschton Depot evidences the railroad's introduction and is a landmark around which the City rapidly grew. The city limits extended  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile in every direction from the depot's center. Across from the depot is a commercial block that marked the town's commercial center. Beyond this commercial area, the majority of the City's residential homes existed within a three-block area. Other homes also existed along other streets on the north, west and south parts of town.

In 1976, a survey (Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources) of historic resources was conducted to identify historic properties in Jackson County. This survey found 11 historic buildings in Hoschton. These buildings generally date to the late nineteenth century and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, comprising residential, commercial and institutional buildings. They functioned as houses, stores, a depot, and church. These surveys typically did not include early twentieth century buildings that, at that time, were not "technically historic" or 50 years of age. This number is, therefore, probably low and a greater number of historic resources currently exist. For purposes of comparison, the U.S. Bureau of Census compiles data on "Houses Built Before 1939." This information reports that 30 historic, residential houses existed in Hoschton (2000). It also reports that 45 houses exist dated between 1940-59 in the 2000 census. However, this data does not include information about condition, architectural style and historical significance. It does suggest, however, a greater number of historic buildings exist than previously documented (i.e., 1976 survey).

More recently (2002), the Georgia "Find It" Program, a survey partnership sponsored by the Georgia Transmission Corporation (GTC) in partnership with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division (HPD) and the University of Georgia, surveyed cultural resources in Hoschton. It "intensively" identified historic resources and is probably the most accurate data available. It identified seventy-five historic properties in the town. Of these, twenty-seven were believed to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places; 38 "may be" eligible; and ten were not eligible for the National Register. The twenty-seven eligible properties are shown on the table below with locations found on the historic resources map. The 38 "may be" eligible properties require further examination to determine eligibility and include properties like the City's two churches. The properties in the table below, as a result, represent a conservative account.

Survey #	Date	Address	Name/Type
199	1921		"Ye Old Station"
200	1890	45 Peachtree Rd.	House
201	1880	77 Peachtree Rd.	House
202	1880	Peachtree Rd.	Bethlehem Cemetery
203	1920	3756 Hwy. 53	House
206	1931	4051 Hwy 53	House
208	1920	4137 Hwy. 53	House
210	1931	4086 Hwy. 53	House
211	1919	Hwy. 53	House
213	1911		"Larry's Garage"
214	1941	73 First Street.	House
219	1901	59 Broad Street	House
221	1915	203 New Street	House
229	1941	100 Jefferson Street	House
230	1868	Main Street	House
231	1890	Main Street	House
232	1891	51 Main Street	House
237	1920	107 Jefferson Street	House
239	1931	131 Jefferson Street	House
243	1935	155 Jefferson Street	House
253	1900	73 Hwy. 53	House
254	1910	Lloyd Lott Ave.	City Hall
255	1951	4335 Hwy. 53	"P&G Superette"
264	1930		Abandoned
269	1891	Mulberry (end)	House
270	1920	153 Mulberry Ave.	House
271	1920	50 Hall Street	House

Based on this information and the numbers of historic properties, a small, intact historic district could be delineated and possibly nominated to the National Register. The survey's information also suggests that a closer examination of these properties is needed to determine, precisely, National Register eligibility, particularly for the questionable properties. However, the twenty-seven National Register eligible properties do fall within three historical periods. The majority of historic properties are from the period 1900-1930 with 16 or 59% of the total. The second largest number dates to the period 1880s-1900 with 8 properties representing 30% of the total. The least number is also the most recent dating from the period 1940s-1950s with 11% and only 3 individual properties. These numbers generally reflect Hoschton's historical periods of growth, beginning with the public sale of lots in the 1880s and expanding after the turn-of-the century. In terms of architectural style and building types, Hoschton is diverse. The Queen Anne and Craftsman styles are well represented as well as various vernacular building-types like central halls, New South Cottages, and bungalows.

Hoschton, in summary, is a historic town with relatively diverse historic resources still found. While some have been altered or, in limited cases, razed, it continues to retain some of its original, historic character. This is evident in original street patterns, representative commercial and residential buildings, and the cultural landscapes they occupy. Opportunities exist to not only retain the existing historic character but to progressively improve or reconstruct missing or vacant parcels. This approach could result in improving the appearance and character of the town while

accommodating new residential and commercial growth. Technical assistance, design standards, and protection of existing historic resources are ultimately required to accomplish this goal.

## Recognized Cultural Resources

### Properties Listed in the National Register of Historic Places:

#### *Hillcrest-Allen Clinic and Hospital. Listed May 2, 1985*

The Hillcrest-Allen Clinic and Hospital is a 1914-17 Neoclassical styled building that also includes several historic outbuildings. The house was once part of a 2,000-acre farm that cultivated diverse crops, such as cotton, corn, soybeans, apples, and pecans. It also is the location of the original “Hosch Store” that formally established the City of Hoschton. The store’s original location was across the street from the Hillcrest-Allen Clinic property. This property and the area around it evidence the site of the Town’s beginnings and exist as a cultural landscape. The home itself functioned as a residence and later as an important medical facility, beginning in 1930. It survives as Hoschton’s most significant historic resources.

#### *Hoschton Depot. Listed March 31, 2000*

The Hoschton Depot is the only physical evidence of the railroad that exists in the town. It was built in 1883 to provide train service with The Gainesville Midland Railroad line. The depot operated until 1947 and provided for both passenger and freight service. The depot, like others found in Georgia, contained a large freight room, a smaller passenger waiting room and an interior ticket room. The railroad line stretched from Gainesville to Monroe (Walton County) and then linked to the Georgia Railroad in Social Circle. The Hoschton Depot was rehabilitated in 2002 as part of a Transportation Enhancement project funded through the Georgia Dept. of Transportation.

*[Copies of National Register nominations are on file with the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center in Athens and the Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources/Historic Preservation Division in Atlanta].*

### Properties for Future National Register Listing:

***Hoschton Historic District.*** This district would include some of the 27 surveyed historic properties extending to the downtown’s commercial buildings and surrounding residential buildings. While Hoschton does contain many historic resources, many intrusions (e.g., infill development) have created gaps within the historic areas. In addition, physical changes to individual historic buildings that altered their historic character will affect the boundaries of a potential district. Further research is needed on individual historic properties and the district as a whole to evaluate Hoschton’s National Register eligibility.

### Archaeological Resources:

Hoschton exists in an area inhabited over 12,000 years ago by human inhabitants known as Paleoindians. The Paleoindian period was followed by 10 other archaeological periods to the present. No known archaeological sites exist within the Town, yet there is potential for their existence. One archaeological investigation was conducted in 2003 on a 14-acre private tract that found one archaeological site. This site was determined to be limited in significance and not eligible for National Register listing.

One archaeological site (historical) in Hoschton, the Bethlehem Cemetery, was identified by the Advisory Committee and is considered a community landmark.

## **Community Landmarks:**

Hoschton's important historic resources that evidence its past are called "community landmarks." The following list was identified by the Citizens Advisory Committee (see map for locations). They should be considered in the Town's future development, particularly when change (i.e., development) may negatively affect them.

- Hoschton Depot
- Hillcrest-Allen Clinic
- Bethlehem Cemetery
- City Hall
- Sell's Mill Park Area (located in Jackson County)

## **Georgia Historical Markers:**

The Georgia Historical Society administers the Georgia Marker Program that places bronze plaques in places or sites of historical significance throughout Georgia. Each marker provides a written text about recognized places to educate the public and function as a resource for tourist. One marker exists in Hoschton and is listed below:

### ***Hoschton Train Depot***

The four Hosch brothers founded Hoschton in 1881 in the hope of influencing the proposed route of the Gainesville, Jefferson and Southern Railroad. In 1833 [sic] this depot was built on land donated by the brothers. The railroad transformed the town and surrounding areas, serving as a catalyst for the development of commerce, agriculture, education, industry, communications, and transportation. The railroad provided a link with other Georgia communities, opened the market for the region's agricultural products, made manufactured goods widely available, and stimulated the growth of businesses, churches, schools, and the town itself. Train service ended in 1947.

*Erected by the Georgia Historical Society, the City of Hoschton, Hoschton Women's Civic Club, and Hosch Family Descendants.*

The citizens' advisory committee considered erection of new historical markers and no new locations were identified.

## **Assessment**

Future opportunities in Hoschton towards preservation are centered on 'saving what is left of the town.' Some changes have been made, but the City is committed to preserving the buildings that evidence J.R. Hosch's original town. This commitment is also expected to have community and economic development opportunities.

Two of Hoschton's cultural resources are recognized through National Register listing. The remainder of the town, as a district, is unrecognized. Beyond recognition, no local (zoning) protection exists for these recognized and unrecognized cultural resources. The City is proceeding with an overlay zone for the commercial downtown buildings to protect them from demolition and changes that alter their historic character. Once this overlay is in place, future plans may involve extending this zone or district to surrounding residential areas. However, public information that accurately informs about historic preservation ordinances is needed to build public consensus.

Hoschton has opportunities to redevelop within the historic area. Development in the form of infill construction that conforms to the existing historic character could help accommodate future growth as well as enhance the City. The parcel next to City Hall is particularly important, offering opportunities for (historically appropriate) expansion of City Hall or for private development. Design standards need to be in place to ensure compatibility with any future, new construction. Restrictions in the form of covenants or easements should be used if the current City Hall is

vacated or the adjoining lot sold to protect this area's visual character. More generally, this parcel, and others, offer redevelopment opportunities, both private and public, and proposals should be carefully considered and planned.

Economic development opportunities within the downtown area are considered strong. Most customers to local business are from surrounding areas (e.g., Winder, Monroe, and traffic off I-85) and not necessarily local residents. Business is expected to grow, building on prior successes and promoting Hoschton's 'local color' is a viable strategy. On the other hand, local residents walking to and patronizing business will not sustain these establishments and the City's economic vitality.

The commercial area is viewed as the most important to the town and first priority in terms of applying design standards and zoning protection. Businesses thrive on their original, unique character. Hoschton too prides itself on locally owned businesses and a place that is "franchise free" These qualities are believed to draw alternative crowds and provide economic development for the town. Streetscape improvements will contribute to this marketability. In short, historic preservation and economic development for the commercial downtown go hand-in-hand.

In the past, Hoschton has shown consistent interest in historic preservation, particularly in improving local properties (e.g., depot) and in recognizing places as historically significant. City Hall is, symbolically, located in a downtown, historic building. A local, non-profit organization, The Hoschton Civic Club spearheads local preservation efforts and has been instrumental in initiatives benefiting the Town.

Regional development and growth in adjacent Braselton will have effects on Hoschton. Traffic is likely to increase through the downtown and ways to alleviate this need to be considered.

## Needs

- National Register district nomination for the City including commercial and residential areas.
- Design guidelines for existing properties and infill development in the downtown area.
- Historically appropriate development of vacant land.
- Further consideration of development of vacant parcel adjoining City Hall.
- Enhancements to downtown area for both residents and patrons frequenting local businesses.
- CLG Status for downtown area.
- Continued involvement and association with Sell's Mill as a community resource.
- Proceed and accomplish work items identified in comprehensive-planning process.
- Educate residents about the benefits of historic preservation.
- Information about historic preservation to build public consensus.

## Goals and Policies

Goal: Allow for infill development while preserving town's historic character.

Goal: Make concerted efforts to save and preserve existing historic resources.

Policy: Work in coordination with local businesses to improve historic commercial area.

Policy: Encourage compatible commercial and residential development within town center that conforms to original patterns and designs.

Policy: Provide information about historic preservation to garner public support.